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PPB 71-1839

7 December 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Planning, Programming,
and Budgeting

SUBJECT : Evaluation of the CIA Senior Seminar

1. This report describes my reactions to and evaluation of the CIA Senior Seminar in which I participated from 19 September to 24 November 1971. It also contains my personal assessment of the value of the Seminar to other participants and to the Agency (although perhaps this is presumptuous).

2. The composition and scheduling of the Seminar can be seen in Attachment A and is not discussed in any detail in this report. Attachment B contains the views of all Seminar participants on Agency management.

Anatomy of the Seminar

3. This was the first running of the Senior Seminar. The stated objectives were as follows:

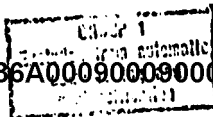
a. To develop greater insight into problems facing CIA management, the processes of change in its external relationships, and developments in society relevant to CIA.

b. To acquaint participants with U.S. foreign policy and developments.

c. To provide an opportunity for senior officers to renew personal motivation and appetite for achievement and to broaden understanding of "the other guy."

4. Twenty persons participated, representing all four Directorates and the O/DCI (O/DCI-1; DD/P-6; DD/I-6; DD/S&T-4; DD/S-4). There were no non-Agency participants.

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5. Of the 20 participants, there was one GS-18, approximately six GS-16s, and the remainder were GS-15s. The average length of service in CIA was about 20 years.

6. There were no women, nor were there any black, brown, red or yellow participants; however, there was one ~~male~~ black speaker. (Several guest speakers remarked in private conversation about the male "whiteness" of the group.)

7. The participants represented a very wide variety of skills and experience: FI ops, CI ops, CA ops, photo interpretation, communications, ADP management, strategic intelligence analysis, current intelligence analysis, security, logistics, electronics technology, overhead satellite reconnaissance development, economic analysis, geography, not to name them all.

8. The Seminar included one week at [REDACTED] (the first week) one brief, domestic field trip (three to four days) and about eight weeks in the Headquarters/Washington area.

General Evaluation

9. In my opinion, the Seminar very adequately met the objectives which had been set. I personally found the experience interesting and rewarding, and very refreshing. I believe that this opinion is shared by every other participant.

10. The persons selected to participate in the Seminar seemed to be exceptionally able, intelligent people. Only two or three members seemed to have difficulty in dealing objectively and intellectually with some of the more provocative ideas and activities presented during the course. It would be highly desirable to have an additional four or five higher ranking people in future Seminars (GS-17 through EPS).

11. The selection of the course subject matter I thought to be excellent and the order of appearance of the material logical and timely. The guest speakers with few exceptions were also excellent -- they seemed to have command of their fields and almost all made effective presentations. There was generally enough time for questioning and discussion. The staff which managed the Seminar (some from OTR and some on loan from other components) should be commended for the good planning and development work which was apparent and for the day-to-day administration of the Seminar.

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12. Nearly all of the participants in this first Seminar had spent their CIA careers in one line of professional work, often within one component. Most, therefore, had limited knowledge of the activities and programs of other Agency elements. The Seminar offered them fairly deep and quite comprehensive exposure to a broad range of Agency activities and to the objectives, operations and problems of other organizations which probably could not have been achieved through normal work routines. It was apparent that there is a strong commonality of concerns and interests among various Agency components and both a need and a desire for improved intra-Agency communication. The Seminar provided a good means for establishing contacts, for exchanging views and for relating the great variety of skills and experience which the Agency possesses. I hope that the personal relationships and lines of communication which were established during the Seminar can be maintained.

13. The meetings with Congressmen and Congressional staff members, with NSC and White House officials, and with ranking State Department officers provided Seminar participants a unique opportunity to obtain the views of policy makers on domestic and foreign developments, to perceive their attitudes toward CIA and the Intelligence Community and to discuss their intelligence needs. Similarly, discussions with prominent academicians (historians, political scientists, area specialists, and economists) and with the new breed of "futurists" (those whose concern is to ponder the nature of the world 15 or 20 years from now) made an important contribution. The views of these latter groups, in particular, caused us to reexamine our opinions and interpretations in a more objective way and to question the extent to which the Intelligence Community, because it is a virtually closed society, could become subject to stereotype and narcissism in its intellectual processes.

14. A number of CIA speakers, and Seminar participants themselves, were prone to exalt the Agency and to belittle other departments -- particularly NSA, DIA and State. (There was an inordinate amount of time spent telling ourselves how good we are.) While I had no reason to disagree with this praise of the Agency, it struck me that excessive self-adulation can lead to overconfidence and a disregard of the views of others. This could produce unfortunate results over the long run.

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15. The appearance of speakers dealing with race problems, youth problems, counter cultures, radical groups and drug problems also made a strong and valuable impression. Although this segment of the Seminar may have been the most controversial among the participants, depending upon the individual "set" one might have on any of the issues presented, the exposure to the views of specialists in these fields is, in my opinion, important for CIA's senior and middle-level managers.

16. Whether or not the Seminar should include participants from other intelligence agencies is a complex problem. The presence of non-CIA persons obviously should increase understanding and improve communication within the Community. Outsiders should be able to make valuable contributions which are not available from other sources. On the other hand, the presence of non-CIA members in the Seminar might result in the guest speakers (CIA and non-CIA speakers) and the Seminar participants themselves being less frank and candid in their presentations and discussions. (The frankness and candor which was exhibited throughout the Seminar was one of its most rewarding features.) I do not have an answer or a recommendation for this matter, but I believe that it warrants further consideration by management.

17. I have only two complaints to register and it is likely that several participants will register the same criticisms. I consider these complaints to be of equal importance:

a. Too tight schedule: Nearly every day involved attendance at four or five and sometimes six or seven presentations. The normal day "in session" ran from about 0815 until 1645 -- sometimes with night sessions added to the top. There was inadequate time for preparation and for discussion among the participants, which reduced the value of the experience. Also, this too-full schedule created a general lassitude toward the end of each morning and afternoon session and a decided loss in attention. There was insufficient time for reading, relaxing or physical recreation, which I believe are necessary if one is to obtain the full benefits of advanced study.

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b. No Defense Department coverage: Except for one presentation by General Earle Wheeler and one by Dr. Rehtin (Deputy, DDR&E), there was no coverage of Defense intelligence or military activities. As a minimum, the Seminar should have had speakers from DIA, NSA, and perhaps from other Defense organizations.

Recommendations

18. Continue the Senior Seminar.
19. Develop a somewhat more relaxed schedule (add a week to the course if necessary).
20. Include coverage of selected Defense Department activities.
21. Reevaluate the future need for the Advanced Intelligence Seminar (AIS), the Midcareer Executive Development Course (MCEDC) and the Advanced Management Planning Course (AMP).
22. Determine the most effective combination of the courses needed. For example, it might be desirable to eliminate the AIS and AMP and schedule but one running each year of the Senior Seminar and one running of the MCEDC. (Perhaps on this basis one staff in OTR could manage both courses and the same physical facilities could be used.)
23. Continue to maintain high standards of selection for participation in the Senior Seminar and try to attract more senior people. Particular attention should be given to selecting persons GS-15 and up who have shown flexible attitudes, who are receptive to ideas, and who are willing to engage in personal interaction and confrontation.
24. Evaluate the desirability of having representation from other intelligence agencies.

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RB/hg

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29 November 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : CIA Senior Seminar 19 September-
24 November 1971

1. Having just completed nearly ten weeks in the first running of the CIA Senior Seminar, I am an unabashed enthusiast for the course. Indeed, my belief that the Seminar should be continued is so strong that my comments in this memorandum are focused less on the merits of the present course than on ideas to help improve future runnings of the Seminar. [REDACTED] & Co. put together a remarkably coherent and comprehensive program. In my view, they now deserve the support of the Director and his Deputy Directors in planning the next Seminar and ensuring that it is even better. 25X1A

2. The Seminar was the most rewarding personal and professional experience I have had in years. There rarely has been a two-month period in which my energies, enthusiasm, and interest were as fully enlisted as they were during the Seminar. I learned more about the Agency, of course, than ever before. I was encouraged by the extent to which managers have been looking ahead, by the willingness of many senior people to entertain new ideas, and by the Agency's balance between tough-mindedness and compassion in personnel matters. I was not looking for answers to all problems and questions, but I was agreeably surprised by the extent to which my own concerns are shared by senior officers. This exposure to so many parts of the Agency did not merely confirm long-held prejudices; I tried out ideas, found some of them fairly sound, and discarded or modified others. I leave the Seminar more knowledgeable and approach my job with more confidence and conviction than I had before.

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3. The things above must be said because the Seminar must be justified primarily in terms of tangible benefits to the Agency. Yet I believe the most lasting and beneficial aspect of the course is quite personal and difficult to record on a profit and loss sheet. The Seminar provided me with a unique opportunity for self-renewal (better than reading John Gardner), for introspection, for exchanging ideas with unfamiliar peers, and for exposure to the world outside the Agency and outside the area of foreign affairs. I may not be able to relate all these intangibles directly to my own job, but I have no doubt that the experience of the Seminar will condition my work for a long time to come. About two-thirds of the way through the course I remarked to a fellow Seminararian that the outside world was so intriguing that I wondered why we stayed inside. But whether by design or by accident, the course evolved in such a way that in the final two weeks my attention became redirected toward the Agency and toward the work we do. I believe I am going back to the job with an improved outlook, with wider horizons, and with renewed desire to strive for the best we can produce. Surely it is worthwhile to send selected officers to this Seminar in an attempt to remove some cobwebs and to restimulate minds dulled by the day-to-day experiences of a bureaucrat.

4. Each member of the Seminar evaluated sections of the course in writing as we went along, and each of us was asked to provide a broader evaluation at the end. (Mine is attached.) Despite my enthusiasm, I had many suggestions and I joined the group in some rather spirited criticism of some aspects of the course. I see no reason to cover these suggestions here; most of them are refinements that will be considered or incorporated in the planning of future Seminars. But there are a few problems that I call to your attention because they can only be addressed effectively by senior management.

The Participants

5. Obviously a seminar can only be as good as the people in it. This one had excellent people and a very broad range of skills. Yet I was distressed at times by the extent to which our discussions and question and answer sessions were dominated by a few individuals. Sometimes I felt we were a seminar of ten rather than twenty members. This was fine for those of us who like to talk, but it left me uneasy. Too many people seemed uninterested, or

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unable or unwilling to participate. Some sessions that did not go very well might have been better if there had been more minds churning about in search of ideas. I felt for a time that perhaps some participants had little interest in looking ahead because they do not intend to be with the Agency much longer. But I concluded that the problem was less a matter of age than of outlook. It is essential, I think, that those who select future participants in this Seminar do everything possible to choose people who not only have demonstrated substantive competence and managerial talent, but who are more interested in looking to the problems of the future than recalling the successess of the past. Moreover, they must not be afraid to take a dip in unfamiliar intellectual waters.

Content and Duration of the Seminar

6. If, as I believe, the Seminar's objective of individual self-renewal is as important as informing senior officers about the workings of the Agency, then the Senior Seminar should be less of a trade school and more of a forum for ideas. Participants should be exposed to as wide a range of ideas and issues as possible. This was accomplished to a very large extent in this first Seminar, but I suggest even more looking outward from the Agency and a bit less looking inward at the Agency. I would like to see more contact with universities during the Seminar, more exposure to domestic issues and to government agencies involved in domestic matters, and more presentations by people at odds with US policies in general and with the Agency in particular. I also think there could be more input from DDI offices than there was. Surely with all the time we spend briefing people with only marginal interests in our work, more DDIs could profitably spend a couple of hours with this collection of senior Agency officers.

7. As currently structured, the Seminar needs another week or two to give some time for reading that simply was not available in this session. Certainly the Seminar should not be any shorter than it is now. I know there are problems when senior people are absent from their jobs for so long, but I think the hardships are worth suffering in order to give more people a chance to experience something like the Senior Seminar. Moreover, I believe that you should consider supporting an even longer course--say of three to four months duration--with the additional time used to flesh out the existing structure, to make it richer, and to make more demands on the participants.

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The Kid-Glove Treatment

8. I think the Seminar would have benefited from more controversy, more sparks, and more demands on the participants. I know the Seminar staff had to move gingerly during this first running, but I believe there was too much effort to treat us with kid gloves. During the first few weeks I felt there were too many speakers telling us how good we are and how the Agency can out-perform all others. This changed in the latter half of the course when more and more speakers began to let down some hair and to concentrate on problem areas, on their concerns, and on telling what is expected of us to make this Agency better. I certainly appreciated all the kindnesses and courtesies we were shown by OTR, but I think the staff was too gentle and too concerned about our sensitivities in choosing speakers and methods of making a point. Our group needed to hear some outrageous arguments--or at least ones on which there would be sharp disagreement--in order to open up dormant brain passages and to get some intellectual fluids running again. This happened on occasion, but not often enough. On this point I do not fault the Seminar staff as much as those of us in the Seminar who were inclined to be too polite and too easy on tame speakers.

9. In this same connection--and I know I am in a minority of one on this point--I think that more reading should be expected of the participants. We were encouraged to read, of course, and we were provided with enormous amounts of material, but there was not enough time nor enough demand for reading. One cannot go through the amount of subject matter we did during the past two months without feeling a need to explore some areas in more detail. I wish there had been more time to do so, and that those sending officers to the Seminar would urge maximum use of the opportunities the course provides for developing new perspectives.

The Matter of Clout

10. I may be dead wrong on this point, but I felt this Seminar suffered to some extent because of uneven backing from top-level Agency management. I know that senior officers are busy, that they dislike releasing good people, and that sessions with training groups can be a drag. Nonetheless, our times with you, with Carl Duckett, with Col. White, and with a handful of other

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senior officials were among the highlights of the course. Our group was responsive and highly appreciative of the candor displayed in many of these sessions. We were disappointed there was no similar session with the Director.

11. But more important than personal appearances, the Seminar needs the clout that only top management can provide. To be a success in the future, the Seminar needs the strong support of the DCI, of you the Deputy Directors, and of people throughout your offices who can contribute to it. I believe this calls for offices suggesting areas where they might contribute a speaker, a panel, or an idea for making the Seminar better. I hope the Seminar evolves into an institution within the Agency, one that people are eager to attend, and one that management believes is worth cultivating by putting its best people forward.

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Deputy Chief, European Division
Office of Current Intelligence

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